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Biden Effort Leads to Closure of Dover Crack House

Wilmington, DE – Today, Attorney General Beau Biden announced the historic closure of a property under the Delaware Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act. At a February 15, 2008 hearing sought by the Delaware Department of Justice, a crack house in Dover was declared the site of drug and vice crime and was closed to protect the community.

“I am pleased that for the first time ever we used Delaware's powerful Nuisance Abatement Act to completely close down a well-known drug haven,” stated Attorney General Joseph R. Biden, III. “Nuisance property owners should be on notice: you will not get away with committing or permitting criminal activity on your property. We will use every tool in our arsenal to weed out crime, reclaim our neighborhoods and protect our communities.”

The Delaware Department of Justice obtained all the conditions it sought against the property, located at 176 South Governors Boulevard in the Capitol Park neighborhood of Dover. In his Friday ruling, Superior Court President Judge James T. Vaughn Jr. ordered the property to be closed for the remainder of the litigation and that it be shuttered by the Delaware State Police.

Litigation against the property owners is ongoing. The conditions imposed Friday will remain in effect until a hearing to determine a permanent status of the property is held in early May.

In August, 2007 Attorney General Biden announced an expanded statewide effort to reduce crime using Delaware's newly enhanced Nuisance Abatement Act. The ruling announced today marks the second time in recent weeks that the Delaware Department of Justice has petitioned a court to order action taken against a nuisance property. In December, 2007 a judge ordered two apartments on a West Rehoboth property shuttered, evicted all tenants besides the owners, and strictly limited access to the property.

Enforcement actions under the Nuisance Abatement Act can take a variety of forms including closure of a property. The Delaware Department of Justice actively cooperates with state and local police agencies, local authorities, and civic organizations to identify nuisance properties across Delaware. To date the Department has issued written notices statewide to the owners of more than 20 residential and commercial properties. The notices state that a nuisance exists on the property and they give owners the choice of either voluntarily cooperating to clean up the illegal activity, or of defending themselves in court and being forced to clean up the crime by court order.

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